

Staff Report

Report To: Community Services Committee
Report From: Pamela Coulter
Meeting Date: June 25, 2025
Report Code: CS-25-061
Subject: Request to Rename Ryerson Park – Working Group

Recommendations:

THAT in consideration of Staff Report CS-25-061 respecting Request to Rename Ryerson Park – Working Group, the Community Services Committee recommends that City Council appoint the following staff to support the Working Group: City Manager, Tim Simmonds, City Clerk, Briana Bloomfield, Director of Community Services, Pamela Coulter and Manager of Parks & Open Space, Eckhard Pastrik.

Highlights:

- Council approved Policy CS087 in 2021, which provides clear criteria and a process for naming or renaming City Parks and Facilities. Criteria and procedures are defined within this policy, aiming for consistency in naming processes.
- For the first time, an application to rename Ryerson Park was received under Policy CS087. Council considered Staff Report CS-25-047 and directed the initiation of the renaming process, which involves a detailed review and consideration as outlined in the policy.
- A working group will be formed consisting of Councillors Farmer, Hamley, and Koepke, along with City Manager Simmonds, Clerk Briana Bloomfield, Manager of Parks & Open Space Eckhard Pastrik, and the Director of Community Services.
- The working group will, under the Policy, establish the consultation, particularly with the Indigenous community, and make

recommendations to the Community Services Committee (CSC). CSC will then advise Council, whose final decision on the renaming is binding. Importantly, renaming consideration is focused on the merits related to Policy CS087 without current consideration for a new name.

Strategic Plan Alignment:

[Strategic Plan](#) Priority: This report supports the delivery of Core Service.

Climate and Environmental Implications:

There are no anticipated climate or environmental impacts.

Previous Report/Authority:

[Policy CS087](#)

[CS-25-047 Request Under Policy CS087 to Rename Ryerson Park](#)

R-250526-005

"THAT in consideration of Staff Report CS-25-047 respecting a Request Under Policy CS087 to Rename Ryerson Park, City Council directs staff to initiate the process for renaming."

Background:

In 2021, the Council approved Policy CS087, Naming and Re-Naming Policy for City Parks and Facilities. The policy is intended to provide clear and consistent criteria and the process for naming City Parks and Facilities, as well as considerations and a process where an existing park name is subject to review and consideration for renaming.

An application to rename Ryerson Park has been received on the form required by the Policy (Attachment 1).

The Policy establishes the considerations and principles to be applied to any renaming request. It is incumbent on the person or organization applying for the renaming to provide sufficient information to consider the request. The Process for renaming is outlined beginning on page 7 of the Policy. The process is illustrated in a flow chart in Schedule B to the policy.

This is the first time the policy has been applied to a request for naming or renaming.

In accordance with the Policy, Council considered a report on May 26, 2025, relating to the request to rename Ryerson Park under Policy CS087 and directed that staff initiate the renaming process.

According to the Policy, the next step in the process is a report to the Community Services Committee (CSC). This report presents the renaming request together with the information provided in the application.

This report is also to address the composition of a working group, which is to include three members of Council, the City Clerk, the City Manager or designate, and other staff deemed appropriate, given the nature of the request. At its meeting on May 26, the Council appointed three members to the working group, including Councillors Farmer, Hamley, and Koepke.

The policy notes that the Working Group can obtain legal advice or expert opinion from a subject matter expert who may be able to assist with considering the matter.

Analysis:

Since the initial report, staff and Council members have received a number of emails with interest in the process. There does appear to be a misunderstanding about the process. Council's direction is to move through the process under the policy to consider the renaming request. It was not an approval of the request.

As appointed by Council, the working group will include:

Councillors Farmer, Hamley and Koepke.

Staff: City Manager Simmonds and Clerk, Briana Bloomfield. Given the request is for a park, the Manager of Parks & Open Space, Eckhard Pastrik and the undersigned are also recommended for inclusion.

As a "Working Group" the meetings can be informal. The City Clerk has offered to prepare notes and action items resulting from the work of the group. The number of meetings will be determined by the working group in order to fulfill their mandate.

The working group's work will, in part, involve determining the scope of consultation and information required to consider the request.

The working group will need to ensure meaningful engagement with the Indigenous community. The Working Group will ultimately make a recommendation to Community Services Committee on the re-naming request who will then make a recommendation to Council. The decision of council is final.

Once a decision has been made on the request for renaming, there would be consideration for the actual naming of the park. To consider names at this time may confuse the intent, which is to consider the merits of renaming based on the Policy CS07.

Financial Implications:

This process will require significant staff and Council and Committee resources that are supported by the City's Operational Budget.

Communication Strategy:

In accordance with [Policy CS087](#).

Consultation:

The Working Group will determine the framework and scope of consultation.

The process reflects a structured and inclusive approach to park renaming, necessitating clear communication and inclusive consultation, especially with Indigenous communities. This may require further exploration of integrating Indigenous viewpoints more deeply in municipal naming conventions and reconciliation efforts.

Attachments:

Attachment 1 – Application for Renaming a City Park

Recommended by:

Pamela Coulter, Director of Community Services

Submission approved by:

Tim Simmonds, City Manager

For more information on this report, please contact Pamela Coulter, Director of Community at pcoulter@owensound.ca or 519-376-4440 ext. 1252.